

SOCIAL SECURITY--DISABILITY DETERMINATION SERVICES

PSYCHIATRIC EVALUATION GUIDELINES

1. **General Format:**

The report should be submitted in a narrative form. **This guideline should be followed during the consultative exam to assure that all areas are covered in your report.**

2. **Chief Complaint(s):**

The **chief complaint(s)** alleged as a reason for not working. Include in the section, a statement from the claimant regarding how his/her impairment or condition limits his/her daily functioning.

3. **History of Past and Present Illness:**

This section of the examination report should describe and discuss:

- a. Brief summary or list of background material/medical records reviewed
- b. Psychiatric History
- c. Past and Current Drug and Alcohol Use
- d. Medical History
- e. Social and Family History
- f. Brief Work History
- g. Education
- h. Military History

4. **Mental Status:**

Include in this section:

a. General Appearance

- ✓ Well groomed or unkempt
- ✓ What is the claimant wearing? Are clothes appropriate for weather and situation?
- ✓ Evidence of psychomotor agitation or retardation? Give examples.

b. Attitude and General Behavior

- ✓ Is the claimant cooperative, irritable, belligerent etc.?
- ✓ Is there any indication of malingering or factitious behavior? Explain.

c. Mood and Affect

- ✓ How does the claimant describe his or her mood?
- ✓ Is the claimant's affect congruent with the stated mood? Explain.

d. Content of Thought

- ✓ Are there any delusions?
- ✓ Is the claimant suicidal? Homicidal? What leads you to this conclusion?

e. Stream of Mental Activity

- ✓ Is speech normal or tangential or circumstantial? Give Examples.

f. Orientation

Is the claimant oriented times three?

g. Memory

- ✓ Remote—can claimant remember past events?
- ✓ Recent—can claimant remember 3/3 objects after 5 min?
- ✓ Immediate—how well can the claimant do digit span back and forward?

h. Fund of Knowledge

- ✓ Is the claimant aware of current events? Give examples.
- ✓ Does the claimant know the names of the president and governor?
- ✓ Can the claimant answer simple geography questions, such as naming bordering states?

i. Concentration

- ✓ Serial 7's or 3's? Give claimant's response.
- ✓ Spell WORLD forward and backward?
- ✓ Follow a three step command?
- ✓ Difficulty following conversation. Give examples.

j. Abstract Thinking

- ✓ Interpret proverbs? Give examples.

k. Insight, Judgement

- ✓ Insight into his/her condition?
- ✓ Show good judgement when asked what he/she would do if smelling smoke in crowded theater?

5. Functional Information:**a. Activities of Daily Living**

- ✓ Give complete description of claimant's ADLs.
- ✓ Can the Claimant take care of cooking, cleaning, grocery shopping etc.? Give examples.
- ✓ Does the claimant need assistance with self-care? Give examples.
- ✓ Can he/she handle their own money?

b. Social Functioning

- ✓ Socialize with family or friends? Isolated?
- ✓ Church groups or clubs?
- ✓ Attend church or other events regularly?

c. Concentration, Persistence and Pace

- ✓ Can they concentrate to read a book, work at hobbies, play on the computer etc? Give examples of hobbies or interest and how long they can sustain activity.
- ✓ Finish ADLs in a timely manner?

d. Deterioration or Decompensation

- ✓ Describe any indication of deterioration or decompensation in a work-like setting.

6. Diagnosis (Use DSM-IV Multiaxial Assessment format)

Include a discussion of which finding and observations led to this diagnosis.

7. Prognosis

8. Capability to Manage Funds**9. Medical Source Statement:**

Statement of what the claimant can do despite his/her impairments. This statement should include an assessment of activities such as:

- ✓ ability to reason
- ✓ understanding and memory
- ✓ sustained concentration and persistence
- ✓ social interaction
- ✓ adaptation

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As a consultative examiner for Disability Determinations Services, you are not responsible for making the determination of disability for Social Security disability or Supplemental Security Income claims. However, the information that you provide in your report is very important to the decision making process. The list above specifies the information that we are seeking when we request a psychiatric evaluation. We ask that the report be as descriptive as possible. Quantitative findings are more helpful to us than general statements. For example, instead of saying "recall ability was fair," a more descriptive statement would be "the claimant was able to remember 3/3 objects immediately and 2/3 objects after five minutes." When reporting daily activities, it is more useful to us to have concrete examples of the claimant's activities than vague reports about his or her function. A statement regarding ADLs such as "The claimant needs assistance in performing ADLs" is much less useful for our purposes than a description such as "The claimant's mother prompts the claimant to dress and cooks all the meals. She also does all the shopping as the claimant rarely leaves the house." Reports that include this high level of detail assist us in determining the claimant's ability to perform work.